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CHALLENGE

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DEMS, REPUBLICANS AGREE:

MORE WORKERS' BLOOD FOR OIL

The rulers' war in Iraq has generated a lot of media chatter about a "new American empire." In the last six months, news stories have carried that phrase nearly 1,000 times. The liberal press in particular has taken the Bush White House to task for its "imperial" behavior.

Sure, Bush and the "neo-conservatives" who advise him are imperialists. But so are the liberal politicians who now squawk about a foreign policy based on international alliances. The U.S. is an imperialist country, regardless of the party in the White House. Imperialism — the need to control foreign markets, labor power and resources and eventually to dominate the world — comes from the profit system's basic nature. This isn't a strategic debate between good guys and bad guys in the ruling class. It's a minor tactical tiff among our mortal class enemies, who all agree on the strategy of ruling the world at gunpoint.

Only a communist analysis, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, enables workers to understand the class character of imperialism and to debunk the illusion that imperialist wars can be avoided if only we put a "lesser evil" leader in power. The working class has no interest in choosing among capitalist politicians. Our deepest interest lies in organizing to smash all of them and seizing power for our class, no matter how long it takes.

Let's check history. Bush's conquest of Iraq didn't hatch overnight. It follows the logic of U.S. bosses' plans over many decades. An essential element of that strategy has been ironclad control of Persian Gulf oil. World domination cannot allow a rival to grab an important share of this treasure. The bosses have known this since the end of World War II.

At first, under the liberal Democrats Roosevelt and Truman, they relied on Great Britain to protect U.S. oil interests. The decline of its own empire forced Britain to pull out of the Middle East in 1971. By then, U.S. strategists had come up with a pincer approach, supporting the fascist Israeli military in the west and the fascist Shah of Iran in the east (after the CIA had engineered a 1953 coup to install him). This strategy was refined under the liberal Republican Eisenhower and the liberal Democrats Kennedy and Johnson. But the best-laid imperialist plans often go awry, and an uprising led by Islamic fascists hostile to U.S. interests overthrew the Shah in 1979.

After this major defeat, on Jan. 23, 1980, another liberal Democrat, President Jimmy Carter, made an

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MAY DAY 2003

Full May Day Coverage from Around the World on pages 4-5

SARS: CAPITALISM MAKES NATURAL DISASTERS EVEN WORSE!

SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) appears to be a new and serious disease. There have been big outbreaks in several East Asian countries and in Toronto, Canada. It produces flu-like symptoms and can progress to pneumonia (infection in the lungs). About 6 % of those with the disease have died. Although most SARS patients recover fully, it's still too early to know if those who survive will have permanent disabilities.

SARS appears to be caused by a virus known as coronavirus. ("Corona" means "crown"; the virus has a crown-like appearance when viewed under a microscope.) The coronavirus has been associated with some mild illness in humans and more serious illness in animals. It's likely that the coronavirus, probably in China's Guangdong province, underwent a mutation (a change in its molecular structure), making it more dangerous to humans. Scientists are still learning about how the virus is spread. It may survive for quite a while in human feces and on countertops.

Virus mutations are a fact of life. In a sense, they can be a kind of natural disaster. But like earthquakes, floods or mudslides, the big question is how a society deals with such events. Cheap construction kills workers in earthquakes — that's capitalism at work. If helicopters can ferry thousands of soldiers around the Middle East, how come those helicopters aren't available to rescue workers from mudslides in Latin America. That's a by-product of capitalism, not nature.

At the moment, drugs don't seem to be very effective against SARS. But it's not a mystery how to contain this new infection. The main thing is to prevent the disease from spreading. That's not primarily a technical problem — it's a social one. And that's where the inefficiencies and anti-worker policies of capitalist governments stand out.

Capitalist governments are irresponsible. In capitalist China, despite the label used by the governing "communist" party, officials apparently covered up SARS' rise and lied about it to public health officials worldwide. If the Chinese government had been more forthcoming — as a truly communist leadership would be — perhaps the infection could

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EDITORIAL: U.S. Imperialism Over A Century Old

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unmistakable threat:

"An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

This warning came to be known as the "Carter Doctrine," and it has served as the cornerstone of U.S. Persian Gulf policy ever since. It justified Bush, Sr.'s 1991 "Desert Storm." It underlay Clinton's murderous sanctions against Iraq throughout his presidency, his regular bombing raids against Iraq and even his aerial genocide in 1999 against workers in the former Yugoslavia.

The Bush White House has merely extended the Carter Doctrine. Seven months before the latest war, Vice-President Cheney sounded just like Carter in telling the Veterans of Foreign Wars: "…seated atop ten percent of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could…be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East [and] take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies." But Cheney was broadening the Carter Doctrine beyond Baghdad. The assault on Saddam also targeted U.S. rivals France and Russia, whose bosses have their own imperialist plans for Iraqi oil.

U.S. strategy has therefore followed the same general path since WW II. The biggest tactical change has come with the collapse of the old communist movement and the Soviet Union. Previous checks on U.S. power have dwindled, and U.S. rulers, both Republican and Democrat, have taken advantage of this maneuverability to assert their supremacy. The basic goal — world domination — remains the same and control over Persian Gulf oil is still crucial.

Presently, U.S. imperialism enjoys vast relative military superiority over all its rivals. Since the Clinton years, "American forces [have been] deployed in a grand crescent surrounding the greater Middle East, from the Balkans southeast to Djibouti, east through the Persian Gulf region into Pakistan and Afghanistan, and north into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan." (New York Times, 5/10)

The bosses can get away with murder, and they intend to keep doing it. After all, from their point of view, the entire world is at stake, along with trillions in profits. "Our primary goal," writes "neo-conservative" theorist Max Boot, "should be to preserve and extend [this] 'unipolar moment.'" Boot makes clear that this task will demand more war abroad and fascism at home: "Carrying out all our current global missions will require reversing the military downsizing of the 1990s…Add billions more for homeland security…That's a small price to pay to police the globe."

Boot isn't just a rabid "neo-con." He happens to be a senior fellow at the Liberal Establishment's Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and his article was featured on the CFR's web site. From the working class's standpoint, there's no major rift among the bosses. "The real debate…is not whether to have an empire, but what kind." (New York Times, 5/10) Like the rulers of Ancient Rome and Britain, U.S. bosses alternate between acting alone and creating "alliances" based on a carrot-and-stick approach.

Workers have to remain level-headed and firm. We can't fall for the liberals' claims that their leadership can build a "kinder, gentler" imperialism. There's nothing kind and gentle about the Carter Doctrine. Just look at Iraq today. And we can't succumb to cynicism or hopelessness just because U.S. imperialism now seems so powerful.

The Chinese communist leader, Mao Zedong, compared the imperialists to "paper tigers." He said we must take full account of the bosses tactically, recognizing their enormous capacity to spread havoc and murder. By the same token, he expressed contempt for their fundamental strategic weakness, because the profit system will always create problems it can't solve.

Our approach should be: U.S. imperialism has a lot left in its arsenal. We have a long road of small and large struggles ahead. Our tactical arsenal is still very small. However, our strategic arsenal — the theory and practice of revolutionary communism — will eventually prove invincible. The bosses' drive to maintain world domination and the wars that come from it will produce many opportunities for our Party and the working class movement to become stronger. We have a crucial job to do, today and always, for our class and for the generations to come. Sooner or later,the long night of capitalism will turn into the day of communism.✪

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NY TIMES: ALL THE LIES THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

Recently the New York Times, "the paper of record" and leading spokesman for the Eastern Establishment, "confessed" that Jayson Blair, a young black reporter, had invented details and lifted quotes from other papers in several articles he wrote for the Times. They spent four pages beating their breasts about this "betrayal" of the Times' allegedly impeccable standards, while vilifying the reporter. The paper acts as if it would never knowingly print something it knew to be untrue. Who are they kidding?

The Times has lied about every imperialist adventure undertaken by the U.S. ruling class it serves. The alleged failings of Jayson Blair pale in comparison.

On April 21, the Times ran a story by Judith Miller headlined, "Illicit Arms Kept Till Eve of War, An Iraqi Scientist Is Said to Assert." This "scientist" also supposedly linked Saddam Hussein's regime to Al Qaeda and to chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Did Miller ever talk to this "scientist"? No. Did she ever visit his home? No. Did she ever do anything to even substantiate his existence? No. Did she identify any of these so-called WMD's? No. Did she do anything to verify his claims? No.

Her "source"? The U.S. military! And they demanded the right to censor her story before permitting its publication. Yet her report became worldwide news, used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Such is the "fact-checking" employed by "the paper of record."

This is just one of a long list of lies, half-truths and distortions filling the Times. When the CIA engineered the 1953 overthrow of the Iranian leader Mossedegh and installed the murderous Shah; when the U.S. overthrew the popularly elected governments in Guatemala (1954) and Allende in Chile (1973) and assassinated Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, the Times just parroted the White House lies. It usually took them 30 years, after the truth of these events were reported worldwide, before the Times admitted what actually happened.

And the biggest whopper of them all was the Times' military editor's "report" in June of 1941 that Hitler would defeat the Soviet Red Army in six weeks! For over two decades their "fact-checkers" somehow "missed" the progress made by the workers' government in the USSR, which created the ability to smash Hitler's Nazis, the first force to stop them. No, the Times just could not report the truth about the first attempt in world history to erect a state not based on profits and the exploitation of the working class.

All the lies that's fit to print, indeed.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Boston Students Lead Fight vs. Racist Budget Cuts

BOSTON, April 29 — About 75 students and faculty from Roxbury Community College (RCC) packed into a school bus to attend a demonstration at the State House today. With high spirits, they joined thousands from every public college in Massachusetts. The demonstration opposed the draconian 20% budget cuts that threaten to devastate public higher education.

These cuts would force thousands to drop out of college, lay off a huge number of faculty and staff and slash student services. Already 40% of Boston public school employees have been excessed, laying off thousands of teachers and increasing class size. As of April 1, 43,000 patients were dropped from Medicaid.

Speakers exposed the anti-working class nature of the cuts. One attacked the Democrats and the failing union strategy of lobbying these liberals to preserve our services, jobs and benefits. The Massachusetts Teachers Association kept a tight lid on the politics, focusing on the call for new taxes and reduction of corporate tax loopholes.

Only the PLP leaflet blamed the crisis of capitalism for the cuts and called for a general strike of all government workers to defend our vital public services. Our leaflet exposed how for 35 years the Democratic legislature bolstered the profitability of Massachusetts bosses, dropping their share paid into the state's general fund from 16% in 1968 to only 4% today. This has undermined the financial base of vital public services.

RCC students, first-timers at a demonstration, were organized to attend by fellow students who have been meeting with the RCC Anti-War Committee. Even though they don't hold official positions in student government, they are learning that they are student leaders nevertheless because they have the courage to speak for the collective. Gaining a political understanding of the world is motivating them to organize their fellow students to make changes in our own backyard. They see that the same bosses who sacrifice Iraqi workers for global domination also balance their budget on the backs of workers and their children.✪

Army Vet's Workfare 'Reward': Joblessness

NEW YORK CITY, May 4 —Capitalism promotes poverty. Marvin Washington, a 45-year-old father of two, an army veteran with a metal rod in his hip from a service injury, was considered a "poster child" for the Clinton/Giuliani "welfare-to-work" promise. His reward for having "fought for his country" is that he's another victim of the slave labor Workfare program that keeps workers in grinding poverty.

Eight years ago he was unemployed and forced to work off his welfare check in the city's Workfare program. He scraped by on this below-poverty-level "wage" for three years when he landed a full-time job in the Sanitation Dept. For $18,000 a year he had to take three trains and a bus to work erratic shifts in which he might get off at midnight and then have to be back at 8 AM. But he worked hard and advanced to a $26,000-a-year clerical position overseeing bookkeeping and handling civilian complaints. Things were looking up.

On May 2 he received a layoff notice as billionaire Mayor Bloomberg slashes jobs to "balance the budget" on the backs of the poorest workers. Washington told the N.Y. Post (5/4) that he "thought there would be longevity" with a city job. Now, he must go back on welfare and the slave labor Workfare program. "I don't know how I'm going to make it," he says.

Such are the fruits of Clinton's "ending welfare as we know it." There's only one way to end welfare — wipe out the capitalist profit system that creates mass unemployment and promotes the treadmill of poverty forced on army vets like Marvin Washington.✪

Bush 'Victory' in Iraq = Al Qaeda Reloaded

"Al Qaeda is on the run," says Bush (New York Times, 5/14). "They're not a problem anymore."

They're "on the run" alright — running amok all over Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, Yemen and Afghanistan, to name just four hot spots bin Laden's forces attacked virtually simultaneously on May 12-13.

Bush & Co. claimed that getting rid of Saddam Hussein would crush terrorism in the Middle East. But if anything, the U.S. invasion of Iraq has intensified anti-U.S. hostility in the region, as the latest attacks indicate. This latest assault in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, represents Al Qaeda's drive for regime change in that country. Bin Laden represents those forces in Saudi ruling circles who want to take control of the country's oil production, largest in the world. U.S. seizure of Iraq's oil has only heightened the threat felt among the Saudi bosses. The bin Laden forces want the U.S. completely out of not only Saudi Arabia but of the entire Middle East and Muslim/Arab world.

The attack on the Western enclave in Riyadh was a well-planned and well-coordinated strike, with car bombs being driven deep into the guarded community by machine-gunning invaders, killing at least two dozen, including seven from the U.S. It was accomplished despite repeated warnings an attack was imminent. Even a Saudi raid on a militants' cell a week before couldn't prevent all 19 cell members from escaping, including 17 Saudis.

This latest incident follows the April 20 assassination of the chief of police of the Saudi town of Skaka, the fourth official to be shot dead in the last eight months, part of nine armed clashes occurring in the country since December.

"U.S. intelligence…bragged to reporters that the terrorist band was crippled, noting that it hadn't attacked during the assault on Iraq." (Maureen Dowd column, NY Times, 5/14) "This was the big game for them — you put up or shut up, and they have failed," Cofer Black, U.S. State Dept. counter-terrorism chief told the Washington Post. Wrong again.

"Buried in the rubble of Riyadh," writes Dowd, "are some of the Bush administration's basic assumptions: that Al Qaeda was finished, that invading Iraq would bring regional stability and that a show of American superpower against Saddam would cow terrorists."

As long as there is imperialism there will be the instability of endless wars. The fight for control of Middle East oil is behind the latest instability and will continue until the international working class ends it with communist revolution.✪

Organizing May Day Inside A Garment Factory

"Today we're celebrating May Day, International Workers' Day," began a garment worker in a speech to over 80 co-workers at lunchtime. A workers' committee had organized this activity ahead of time. During its preparation, many had discussed the political ideas around the significance of May Day and why they should participate, from giving money for food to inviting their friends. Everyone liked the speech and the food.

Two days before, the Party distributed a leaflet at the factory calling on workers to march on May Day. It denounced exploitation, fascist deportations and imperialist wars, and championed the fight for a communist world, with workers in power, producing for our needs, not for the bosses' profits. The leaflet and CHALLENGE were well-received.

This is our second May Day celebration inside this factory. We aim to broaden out to many more factories and garment shops. There's a long road to travel and many obstacles to conquer, but these activities give us the confidence that workers can and will take as their own the political ideas that will break the chains binding us to this rotten capitalist system.

We vow to increase the distribution of CHALLENGE to broaden our base of support for the many struggles that lie ahead.

A garment worker

Capitalism: It's in The SARS

continued from front page

have been contained in China.

Capitalist disorganization promotes the spread of infection. Whether it's TB, AIDS or now SARS, the social disorganization of capitalism makes it difficult to control infectious diseases. Erratic communication of information to the public leaves people unaware of the risk they pose to themselves and others. Systematic isolation of potentially infected individuals is complicated by lack of health care coverage and economic pressures not to miss work or to "keep the economy running." Under communism, the necessary isolation of individuals and institutions could be carried out quickly and efficiently — with the entire population's full knowledge and participation.

Capitalism undermines prevention. Millions of workers work closely with animals, especially birds, who harbor viruses that could mutate and "jump" to humans. That's the nightmare scenario: mutated viruses, capable of being spread easily from person to person, causing dangerous epidemics. In capitalist societies, industries involving work with birds and other animals are oriented toward making profits — not toward safety of workers or the public. Under communism, industry is organized to serve people's needs, not bosses' profits. Public health workers could ensure that animal-to-human virus transmission is minimized. Moreover, communist health workers will develop drugs and vaccines far more rapidly and efficiently than capitalist drug companies that are in it only for the bucks.

SARS, like so many other diseases and disasters, begins with nature. Capitalism does not adequately protect us against natural dangers. Communism can and will.✪

MAY DAY 2003: MARCHING THE

PLP's May Day activities, although modest, should not be underestimated politically. Last year we marched after the destruction of the World Trade Center and in the midst of the rulers' launching a Homeland Security fascist police state. This year we marched before the smoke had cleared from the racist, imperialist massacre carried out in Iraq. While U.S. imperialism flaunted its military might before the whole world, while Bush carried out his "Top Gun" fantasies on a U.S. aircraft carrier returning from the slaughter, beneath the headlines and the massive "embedded" media propaganda (embedded with the imperialist butchers), the communist movement was on the move in the belly of the beast.

These are complex times. We can only begin to grasp the nature of the period through the collective efforts of our revolutionary communist party and its many friends, applying the science of Dialectical Materialism as best we can. The racist rulers are giants with feet of clay. The war in Iraq has intensified all the contradictions between the imperialists, among the bosses and between the rulers and the working class. This is a period of increased turmoil and a quickening tempo. History is moving faster.

The millions around the world who marched against the war, who represent millions more, reflect that the masses on some level have moved to the left, opposing U.S. imperialism. Tens of thousands in the anti-war movement responded enthusiastically to CHALLENGE and our Party's call for communist revolution. The response of the immigrant workers in Brooklyn to our May Day march was especially inspiring. On our jobs and in our schools and communities, thousands of CHALLENGE readers supported and/or participated in various May Day activities. This, as the ruling classes and mass culture moved to the right, embracing nationalism, racism and fascism.

But likewise, the quickening pace and the millions in the streets create huge opportunities, even though we have a long way to go. Communists' political work requires a sense of urgency while we also take a very patient, long-term view. The demise of the old international communist movement is still a big burden on the working class. On the one hand, we stand on the shoulders of these past giants. But we are also learning from their mistakes as well as their strengths. It was these internal weaknesses — taking on too much of the baggage of capitalism — that led to that movement's downfall, not the attacks from the outside by world imperialism.

Our modest efforts during the recent oil war in Iraq and in building May Day are important steps in re-building the confidence of the working class in communist politics. A PLP entrenched in the working class and among its allies will become the alternative workers are seeking to this rotten capitalist system.

The internal strength of the Party and the mass movement is primary. Mao Tse-tung said if you step on an egg it breaks, but if you step on rock it doesn't. It's what's inside the egg and the rock that is primary, not the foot stepping on them. Slowly but surely, we are building a rock.

Black Immigrant Workers Welcome Marchers

BROOKLYN, NY, May 3 — Curiosity turned to support among passers-by in the Flatbush neighborhood here as PLP's ideas resounded through the streets on this May Day afternoon. Everything about our march stood out. First of all, our line was different, and it caught the ear of the people. We were anti-war, but it wasn't a peace march. The people loved our "FIGHT BACK" chants in all their variations, including when we attacked the liberal politicians. Our ability to connect war, cutbacks and deportations summed up in the phrase "there is no future for us under this system" met with no disagreement. CHALLENGE sellers got out 1,600 papers throughout the day's events.

Secondly, the march was multi-racial and visibly led by all kinds of people. Another important thing is that our march was actually in Flatbush, a majority black immigrant neighborhood. Of the many anti-war marches organized recently in New York City none had happened yet in Flatbush, which supplies more than its share of soldiers to the U.S. war machine due to the racist economic draft.

The march was spirited and the dinner was great. Students carried the day, with an acting troupe from a local high school putting on skits about Paul Robeson — the great singer, actor, athlete, pro-communist anti-racist fighter — and the war. Young poets from Chicago proved that truly communist rap music is the best. For those few hours there was a real sense of victory, of progress. Hundreds attended several other May Day dinners throughout the city.

Communism brings out the best in people. Wars will come, fascism will intensify, and Progressive Labor Party will continue to organize to bring down capitalism and celebrate May Day in the coming years. Our hope for the future shines brightest on that day each year, and each year, more of our class brothers and sisters see that light. Onward!✪

May Day Around the World: Clockwise on this page: Red Flags in Bangladesh, Marchers in Cuba and demonstrators in Sydney, Australia hold up cards of the biggest war criminals: Bush and Company. Opposite page, PLP May Day in Los Angeles; a young boy in front of red flag in Baghdad, Iraq; PLP May Day in Brooklyn NY; crowds gather in Argentina.

Mexico: State or Free Market Capitalism Sucks

MEXICO CITY, May 1 — PLP marched on May Day with the electrical workers' contingent. Our line of "Only communism will liberate the working class" spread like a prairie fire among thousands of marchers who took our flyers. One electrical worker took our red flag to march with our group. Our communist chants blasting U.S imperialism's war in Iraq and exposing President Fox's class war against workers here echoed throughout the entire march, especially at El Zocalo, the presidential palace.

We explained how the U.S. "victory" in Iraq sharpens the fight among the imperialists over oil and world hegemony. The bosses' future for all workers is world war (eventually nuclear), mass unemployment, hunger and fascism. The only way out of this nightmare is to fight for communism.

Here the bosses are viciously attacking the working class through "reform" of the labor laws. Workers are suspended for three days for arriving a few minutes late; bosses can fire workers at will. Privatization and capitalism's worldwide crisis are hitting electrical workers hard. However, many in the SME (electrical workers union) and other unions fall prey to nationalism chanting, "Fox, the fatherland is not for sale." They see state ownership of utilities and the oil company as a lesser evil, not as a fight between state capitalist and free market bosses. Both will exploit workers.

Mexico's Nationalist bosses oppose Fox's privatization of state-owned industries when they're handed over to foreign bank rollers. Then they use nationalism to mislead workers into siding with "our" bosses. But, if these nationalist bosses can reap the lion's share of privatization, that's okay. For example, ICA, a Mexican-owned consortium, will be the main investor in an electrical plant in Nayarit, the largest since Fox took office. Local bosses are also competing for the upgrading of the infrastructure of PEMEX, the huge state-owned oil company, and for other public works.

The fight is also sharpening among European and U.S. imperialists and their local agents over the billions involved in these projects. We must unite against all of them, build a mass PLP and learn from these struggles how to get rid of all bosses.✪

ROAD TO REVOLUTION

LOS ANGELES, May 3 — "Fight for communism! Power to the workers!"; "Que viva, que viva, que viva comunismo!" chanted the enthusiastic May Day marchers in downtown LA. Youth — black, Latin, Asian and white — led all aspects of the march and dinner. Many wore red caps and red PLP t-shirts. They distributed thousands of leaflets about the history of May Day and the need for communist revolution to destroy the murderous racist capitalist system of wars and exploitation for profit. They sold hundreds of CHALLENGES. At the corners where hundreds of workers watched, short speeches urged them to read the paper and join us.

A lively dinner followed. An eloquent speech from a young comrade linked the war in Iraq to the slashing of health care and the starving workers worldwide, all caused by capitalism in crisis. He explained that communism will unleash the vast potential of the working class to lead and produce for our own needs, evident from the communist movement's many past achievements.

Another speaker said we're entering a new period in which students and workers are open to PLP's leadership and line as we fight in the mass movement for communist ideas. She described how hundreds of students at a MEChA conference acted against the war in Iraq. She invited others to join these activities.

A young worker explained that the unemployed are part of the working class and that capitalism needs racist unemployment to use against all workers, especially during crises. Then two of her friends spoke. One, a young black man who marched for the second consecutive year, said, "I work hard. My father works every day from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. and has nothing to show for it. My whole family works hard….When I hear about people taking vacations in Cancun and Hawaii, I wish my father could do that, but he can't….Look at the farmworkers. They work the hardest and get the least….I loved this march. We're fighting so that people like my father can get the value of what he works for."

Another speaker described the need and opportunity to win soldiers to fight for the working class, not for the bosses. A group of college students performed a skit attacking the racist, sexist bosses.

Many signed up to subscribe to CHALLENGE and two marchers joined PLP at the dinner. Others agreed to be in PLP study groups. Students were invited to a PLP summer project to bring communist ideas to workers. One community college student marcher, active in the fight against cutbacks, had been taking 10 papers to distribute to friends, who would then discuss it together. Now she upped it to 15. A final speaker said the communist movement has been around for 155 years, but the fact that socialism did not lead to communism will not permanently hinder our class since now we know we must fight directly for communism during the growing capitalist crisis and wars.

Other dinners displayed renewed enthusiasm for building the Party and CHALLENGE in the centers of industry and in the mass movement. A group from the Middle East sang the Internationale in their native language in addition to groups singing in Spanish and English.

The march and dinners were very positive even though the turnout was more modest than we would have liked. In building for the march, we had many excellent conversations with friends about the need for the long-term fight for communist revolution. Many of our friends are now taking the Party and CHALLENGE more seriously.

On May 1st we distributed the PLP May Day leaflet to about 2,000 at the immigrant workers' day march, calling for communist revolution. We also handed them out to workers in the garment center both before and during the march, and to janitors voting on their sellout contract the day before. Workers reading the leaflet told us it was very important, folding it up to keep. We are learning to build the Party in this new period, certainly full of danger, but also certainly teeming with opportunity.

El Salvador:

Salute Communist Ideas

San Salvador — Thousands of workers marched on May Day through the main streets of San Salvador, the capital city. Many chanted, "Bush, fascist, you are the terrorist"; "We don't want to be a U.S. colony"; "Long live the communist ideals." Red flags were flying high. Many carried placards with pictures of Karl Marx as well as huge posters with the hammer and sickle, the communist symbol of unity of workers and peasants.

PLP'ers distributed 300 DESAFIO-CHALLENGES and over 3,000 communist flyers. "I was waiting for this paper," said one marcher. "I knew you wouldn't fail to bring us DESAFIO-CHALLENGE," said another. "You guys are doing the right thing with this paper," said a third. Indeed, workers and their allies are searching for revolutionary answers to a capitalist system stinking of wars, economic crisis and fascist repression.

We also met old comrades who said they again want to work with us to fight for communism.

May Day is the day when workers worldwide unite to remember the Martyrs of Chicago, workers who the bosses hung in the late 1880s for fighting for a shorter work-day. But as workers in El Salvador honored those martyrs, they also condemned President Francisco Flores, who serves Bush's foreign policy (he spends almost all his time promoting it in Central America). Supposedly that would get the U.S. government to give better treatment to the many Salvadorans forced to enter the U.S. searching for jobs they can't find here. However, capitalism is no paradise for workers anywhere. Immigrant workers in the U.S. are super-exploited because of racism (providing superprofits for the bosses). They also serve as cannon fodder in the endless wars U.S. rulers wage to maintain world domination.

We in PLP must direct this anger and class consciousness that many workers showed on May Day to build a mass communist movement. It's a long, hard task, but is the only way out, for workers from San Salvador to Los Angeles.

The 'Challenge' of A Lifetime

(Excerpts from a speech at the Los Angeles May Day celebration.)

In June we celebrate the beginning of the 40th year of publishing the revolutionary communist paper of the Progressive Labor Party — CHALLENGE!

A man [with] a bit of wisdom told me that politics is concentrated economics. If politics is concentrated economics, then concentrated politics is right here in my hand — CHALLENGE!

There are many comrades doing good political work. They exemplify the "serve-the-people" ethic. But no matter how high their commitment to the Party and the working class, they alone will never be able to acquire — on their own — the depth and breath of political knowledge necessary to sustain a revolutionary movement.

[The same is true for] some areas and some cities that do more advanced work than others…. Some groups and some comrades write very good leaflets….geared to the particulars on the job, in the schools, churches and the military. But no series of local leaflets can train the most advanced workers to be tribunes of the people — ready to support every protest, every outbreak against capitalism and to utilize these to drive home the revolutionary lessons needed to recruit to our Party.

A young comrade recently…[told] me. "Since 9/11 we are no longer at peace. We have to be much quicker to take advantages of opportunities….He was right.

But how do workers, particularly these younger workers and students…get the training to react quickly to each and every opportunity to build our revolutionary forces? CHALLENGE, with examples from all over…the world, from among students, workers, soldiers and their allies, provides that type of training. CHALLENGE provides the critical concentration of politics necessary to train new revolutionary soldiers….And the wider the circulation, the less likely we are to miss opportunities for class struggle and revolutionary growth.

I sell a good number of papers where I work…. Some workers — not the majority — take the paper out of friendship and curiosity. One such worker was put on another shift. I lost track of him. I could have found him with some effort, but I was hesitant. After all, I was kind of forcing the paper on him. What did it matter?

Little did I know! About two months ago, he came to work early to find me! The world has gone crazy," he said "This Iraq war, it's the politics of the absurd. I came to get the last four months of CHALLENGE. Don't you ever let me miss another issue of that paper!" He then helped me organize an anti-war resolution for our union that has caused ripples all the way up to the international." CHALLENGE brought me this opportunity.

It's not always that easy. Last week, I tried to sell a paper at work to a guy in the Green Party. I had sold him a couple of other issues. "I don't believe that paper," he told me. I had to think fast. "Well, this article here is written by my daughter. I know that is true!"….So he took the paper and liked the article my daughter wrote. The struggle can continue.

You must fight for the paper, to sell it, to write for it…. Not only the huge things… [but] the everyday conversations and debates. I'm talking about the life of the Party!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

LETTERS

"I come from a country that called itself socialist. As I told a speaker at your May Day dinner, I am a member of the CP there. But I have never been to any activity like this dinner with its openly communist message. Thank you again."

—A Friend

Comrade Writes From Pakistan

I gladly write the PLP, the only party forging a real communist movement. To eliminate exploitation, slavery, poverty and illiteracy we must join with the comrades of PLP.

I am a political worker, formerly active in the Pakistan People's Party. But I was much inspired by the ideas in CHALLENGE, The Communist and PL Magazine. I was a socialist but confused after the collapse of the USSR. Reading PLP's literature I was surprised to see our Party's predicting the downfall of the former Soviet Union. Now I'm convinced that the old communist movement's 7th World Congress led to revisionism. Joining with the "Lesser Evils" was wrong.

Capitalist bosses are exploiting workers worldwide from the U.S to Pakistan. Communism is the future for the working class because without a classless society we can't end wars, exploitation and oppression.

In Pakistan and Kashmir, the military and its Pakistani ruling class have raised the prices of basic necessities like sugar, flour, rice, milk, medicines, etc. A worker has nothing after paying the utility bills. They have denied workers unionism and freedom of expression. They suffer the attacks of fundamentalism, racism, fascism and the military. The Communist party of Pakistan cannot lead the working class to revolution because its phony and non committed leadership serves the "lesser evil" line. Nor are other so-called leftist parties real revolutionaries (as they claim) but are only misleading workers in the name of "nation," "people" and "democracy," working for national and/or local bosses. They chant the slogans of "Red Asia" and "long live our nation," diverting the working class from the road to communism. Their long public speeches against oppression do not utter a single word against capitalist exploitation. Some groups use the word socialism but know exactly it's the essence of capitalism.

Another anti communist group here calling itself "Trotskyites" is very busy opposing communism. They try to convince poor people there's no need to build a party of the working class; we can bring "socialism" by entering every other party — "entryism" — whether leftist or rightist. They're dancing to the bosses' tune. The rulers allow them to exist as long as they resist the formation of an international communist party, without which we can't get rid of capitalism. Trotskyite "entryism" disunites the international working class. They claim to be in every party, from the Pakistan People's Party to the Labor Party (UK) and among U.S. conservatives. Their ideas and tactics are very harmful to the working class.

In Kashmir, the reactionary, fanatical groups are terrorizing innocent people, never hesitating to kill them. Most are criminals, but disguise themselves as Mujahid (fanatic and reactionary religious fighters). They claim to be doing Jihad (a sacred war against non-Muslims) for the freedom of Kashmir. They shoot those who are not religious fanatics or who oppose this type of Jihad.

There are so-called progressives using nationalism and socialism to spread their false ideas that we need an independent Kashmir, free from Indian and Pakistani bosses, but in fact they want to make a place for local or national bosses against non-locals. Our internationalism says nationalism, in whatever form, serves the profit system.

Capitalism creates different nations, religions and "races" to divide the working class. We stand for One class, One Party. We want a classless society, without states and nations, which is why we want to smash all borders.That's PLP's communist movement.

Capitalism is producing wars against workers from Iraq to Korea, Kashmir to Colombia, because it needs wars to exist.

Here in Pakistan PLP has an energetic, committed and revolutionary group of communists. We've organized party study clubs and have translated some basic PLP articles into Urdu, like Road to Revolution IV and will send them to you. We strive to build a mass base for the Party.

Our next letter will detail Pakistan's political situation, the building of the Party and club discussions. We are receiving CHALLENGE regularly. Please send us "The Communist" and "PL Magazine." Our communist wishes to the comrades.

Comrade, Pakistan

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Garment Struggle Reveals Power of Working Class

After the May Day dinner, a group of 12 young workers went to a comrade's house for some informal talk. During the evening I mentioned a garment factory where we had led several strikes to stop the bosses from lowering the piece rate and to confront their repression.

One comrade asked, "What did you get out of all that?"

I said these struggles teach valuable lessons to all workers involved, especially our comrades. We could see and feel the power of the workers — since the majority supported us — when we organized and united to fight back. We had a group of CHALLENGE readers. Many read our leaflets.

Of course, the bosses constantly harassed us. One comrade couldn't take the pressure and quit. The boss was happy about that.

That night we met with other workers and decided the comrade had made a serious error, that he had to return to fight for his job. The next day, at 7 a.m., a group of workers confronted the boss demanding he be re-hired. The boss, surprised and fearful on seeing the workers stopping production to support their co-worker, was forced to give him his job back.

Previously, the bosses fired workers and lowered piece rates at will. Now they had to think twice before attacking us. Temporarily at least, the workers experienced the potential power of the organized working class — the class with the potential power to run society in our own interests!

After this explanation, other comrades added more about what it means to win in these class battles between workers and bosses. After this discussion, many of us vowed to go forward and organize in the factories and shops. We ended the night with a dance and the hope of a communist world without borders or exploitation.

A Persistent Comrade

LA May Day Inspires Transit Worker

I want to thank the PLP members who led and helped with the LA May Day dinner and in general to thank all those who came. The international variety of the food was delicious, but even more important, the event restored my confidence in our eventual victory. As one young student said, "With boldness and conviction, a small group of communists were able to influence a mass group to take militant actions against the war in Iraq."

I'm a transit worker. This evening, I came to the dinner with my 5-year-old son. I felt a little uncomfortable and expected to find a forlorn atmosphere of senile revolutionaries only moving by inertia. But this was not the case. The spirit of the dinner inspired me from the beginning, seeing many new faces and an environment of much struggle and confidence in the long-term victory of revolution.

I'm very happy to have come because the revolutionary songs, the speeches, the warmth and friendship and in general the whole event made me go back home with the clear consciousness that the only alternative is the fight for communism, and that the Party is the best and most serious organization that workers possess to fight for a better society.

Since the dinner, my subjectivity has declined a lot, the sale of CHALLENGE has increased and I've developed new prospects for a study group. I'm pushing the struggle in our club, with plans for action and study. I hope that next May Day will be very different. I won't come alone, but with a group of co-workers and their families.

Inspired worker

Fight Against, Don't Trust Politicians

I work at a small technical school in New England. Last month, the school president called a meeting to announce that the school Board had voted to close the institution next year, saying the facility was deteriorating and the Board could no longer afford to keep it open. The faculty and staff were stunned and angered, as were the students at a later meeting. Some blamed the president for concealing information about the financial situation. Some said the school was one of the few available to black, Latin and working-class students, and that without it they would suffer.

The president, offering excuses, said the closing (what he called a "transitional period") would proceed. Soon the faculty and some staff members began to fight back. They had several meetings with the Board and organized a student letter-writing campaign to the Board and to politicians. Then students became somewhat more militant, organizing a protest on the last day of classes, which turned out to be quite spirited.

Their letters were passionate, alluding to the multi-racial, working-class school population. This pressure from the faculty, staff, students, parents and alumni impelled the Board to reconsider their decision, but delayed their vote. So a faculty member took several students to lobby at City Hall. A councilor set up a hearing to order the Board to vote again. Although it appears to be a victory, it's hard to know what the ulterior motives are of the councilor, or of the City Council in general.

But some factors to consider include: the city owns the building housing the school; it also benefits from the many graduates who annually go on to work in the area. One thing is certain — the students shouldn't put their blind trust in the City Council, just as they now know they should not put it in the school president.

A Comrade

Only CHALLENGE Tells It Like It Is

I applaud the contributors of the CHALLENGE for speaking out against the worldwide injustices of capitalism. As a community college student I really appreciate the eye-opening information I have read in CHALLENGE. It's time that teachers, students and the working class wake up and stand up and protest! Finally a source willing to reveal the details and methods behind the madness of the Iraq war and the devastation being caused by the cuts in education.

I am certainly not the only person in my group who is tired of the sugar-coated television version of the news. I plan to circulate the CHALLENGE to many others who are questioning the current events of today.

A West Coast student

Likes PLP's Communist Message

I want to thank you all for a wonderful experience at the May Day dinner. I come from a country that called itself socialist. As I told a speaker at your May Day dinner, I am a member of the CP there. But I have never been to any activity like this dinner with its openly communist message. Thank you again.

A Friend

Colombia Death-Squad Gov't Can't Stop May Day

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA— About one million people marched on May Day in this country's main cities, called by unions, all kinds of social-democrats and reformists. In Bogota, these groups organized three separate activities, confusing and dividing the masses. They feared that too many angry people gathered in one place might get out of their hands. Still, 120,000 workers, youth, men and women, marched in Bogota. They attacked imperialist war and the government's proposed labor reform laws which will destroy the few crumbs workers still have and will give bosses an even freer hand to exploit and fire workers and reduce wages, all to increase their profits.

As in previous years, PLP marched as a contingent in Bogota. With the help and support of many workers, youth and friends, we distributed 3,000 communist leaflets and many copies of DESAFIO-CHALLENGE. One worker in a union contingent was so impressed by our leaflets that he continuously read from them using the group's bullhorn. Our chants were heard widely during the entire march: "Smash imperialist war with communist revolution"; "One working class, one communist flag"; "Youth, organize and fight for communism." Our contingent carried many signs with those and other slogans, behind a huge banner publicizing our communist newspaper DESAFIO.

May Day was a modest step forward for PLP. Our contingent improved in quantity and political quality thanks to the support of youth, housewives and workers. We are struggling to build a more mass revolutionary organization, capable of intensifying the attack on this rotten, fascist, warmaking system. The future won't be easy but we're determined to advance the fight for a society without any bosses.✪

CHALLENGE of A Lifetime

continued from page 5

Now here's an [old] issue.... You see this young skinny soldier? That's me. When I was in the Army we wrote an article for every issue. If there wasn't a big struggle, we interviewed other GIs about their opinions on the issues of the day.

Every week, a couple of dozen brown envelopes would arrive at my company barracks. Pretty soon the captain realized they contained CHALLENGES. So he singled out who he thought was the weakest among us and threatened that soldier with Court Martial and the Stockade if he continued to read the paper. He then seized the envelope, hoping we'd all get scared and cancel our subscriptions. We held an emergency secret meeting the result of which was this "weak" soldier stormed into the captain's office, saw his paper on the captain's desk, grabbed it and stormed back out. Before he left, he informed the captain this was his personal property and the captain was never to touch it.... You got to fight for the paper; you got to fight to read the paper.

We've managed to publish CHALLENGE for 38 years. We've recently increased the press run because we're selling more. Each new reader represents another nail in the bosses' coffin. But.... maintaining CHALLENGE sales is like pushing a snowball uphill.... because CHALLENGE represents the concentration of the Party politic. It is the ideological point man in our struggle to maintain the communist movement.

As fascism intensifies, CHALLENGE will become even more important. Already, we must be careful how we organize for May Day. We'll have to rely on CHALLENGE more and more to bring us the line and experience of our Party.

Yes, CHALLENGE is aptly named. Fighting to read, write and sell our revolutionary communist paper is the challenge of a lifetime.... Take extra papers. Sell many more. Write articles on your struggles. It's a challenge worth a lifetime of struggle.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

US ignores Iraqi women

While the occupiers justify the war in terms of the liberation of the Iraqi people, half of the Iraqi people do not seem to be celebrating their freedom with much vigor. Iraqi women have become almost invisible, almost unheard. Reporters talk to Iraqi men on the streets, not Iraqi women in their homes....

And when the United States gathered a meeting of its chosen leaders at Ur last week, only one woman's voice was heard....

Iraq has a strong tradition of women's education and employment....

Zamia Hake...was appointed Iraq's first female judge in 1959. "Fifty years ago," she says, "women had a very good position in Iraq." (GW, 5/7)

Black kids' ultra poverty

The number of black Americans under 18 years old who live in extreme poverty has risen sharply since 2000 and is now at its highest level since the government began collecting such figures in 1980, according to a study by the Children's Defense Fund, a child welfare advocacy group.

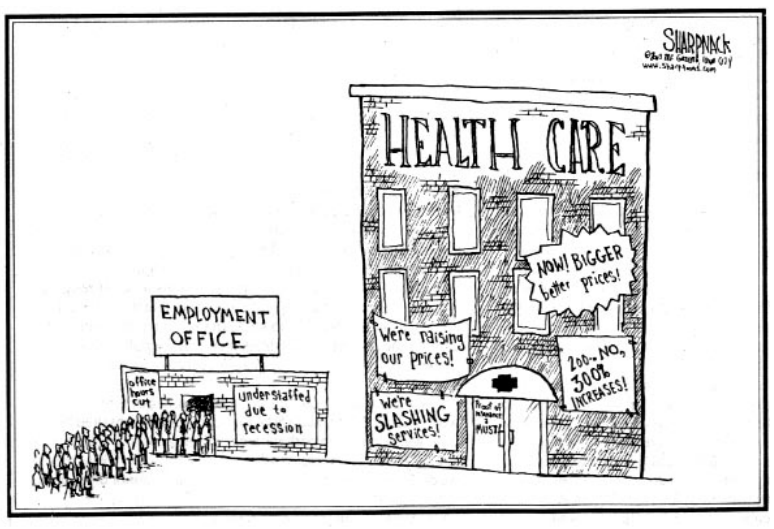
In 2001, the last year for which government figures are available, nearly one million black children were living in families with after-tax incomes that were less than half the amount used to define poverty....

"Recent studies show overall poverty has declined among black children, but fail to show the record-breaking increase in extreme poverty...."

The study shows that in the first recession since the welfare law took effect, black children who have the fewest protections are falling into extreme poverty in record numbers. (NYT, 4/30)

Iraq fascists stay active

BAGHDAD, Iraq, May 7 — Hundreds of Iraqi doctors, nurses and health workers demonstrated today against a decision by



American authorities here to appoint Ali Janabi, a senior Baath Party member, to be minister of health.

The demonstration by doctors in starched white coats was the latest indication of rising concern over the enduring influence of some members of the party that was long the vehicle for Saddam Hussein to impose his terror on Iraq....

Last week . . .an American diplomat...decided to reinstate the Baath Party leadership of Baghdad University, the largest in the country....

Despite Bush administration statements that it would dismantle Mr. Hussein's police state, senior Baath Party officials are working openly in many Iraqi cities, especially here in the capital where power is still up for grabs. (NYT, 5/8)

New Arab war beginning?

Four separate overnight attacks involving explosions and small-arms fire struck Western targets including residential compounds in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, causing an undetermined number of casualties, Saudi officials and diplomats said today.

Initial news reports put the number of wounded from the explosions, believed to have been caused by car bombs, as high as 50....Some victims appear to have been killed.

In an interview with CNN, Robert Jordan, the American ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said there were 40 Americans among the wounded....

A study of world attitudes toward America by the Pew Research Center in December 2002 and many other polls of Muslims from Algeria to Indonesia show ever-rising support for "martyrs." A United Nations report indicated that as soon as the United States began building up for the Iraq invasion, Qaeda recruitment has picked up in 30 to 40 countries. Recruiters for groups sponsoring terrorist acts tell researchers that volunteers are beating down the doors to join. (NYT, 5/5)

What US can bring world

Americans spend more money at strip clubs than at Broadway, regional theatres and orchestra performances combined. The industry has mushroomed since the 1970s, when a federal study found that it was worth little more than $10 million.

Now the US leads the world in pornography....Blue movies now rake in as much as Hollywood... (GW, 5/14)

CIA is vital to US gov't

In his six and a half years leading the C.I.A., he became the very model of a modern major spymaster....

Helms's professional life is essentially the story of undercover operations ordered by presidents. Standout examples: Eisenhower's decisions to topple Prime Ministers Patrice Lumumba in Congo and Mossadegh in Iran, President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and Fidel Castro in Cuba (continued by Kennedy), and Nixon's clandestine war against Allende. In the 1960s, at the peak of racial upheaval and demonstrations against the Vietnam War, President Johnson ordered Helms "to track down the foreign Communists who are behind this intolerable interference in our domestic affairs." This demand led Helms to start up a covert snooping operation that he admits involved "a violation of our charter" not to spy on Americans at home.

On the big stuff, Helms makes a convincing case that rather than being a "rogue elephant" as often charged, the C.I.A. is a president's political weapon of last resort, the keeper of the bag of dirty tricks. If agency acts appear roguish, Helms says, it is when government policy is roguish. (NYT, 5/4)

Empire-builders must lie!

"America is the empire that dare not speak its name," Niall Ferguson, the Oxford professor who wrote "Empire,"....said....

Asked in an interview about Viceroy Jay Gardner's promise that U.S. military overlords would "leave fairly rapidly," Mr. Ferguson replied; I'm hoping he's lying. Successful empires must be based on hypocrisy. The Americans can say they're doing things in the name of freedom, liberty and apple pie....

"From 1882 until 1922, the British promised the international community 66 times that they would leave Egypt, but they never did...."

Until we get democracy stabilized in our new colonies, Mr. Ferguson offers two words of advice: "Better puppets." (NYT, 4/30)

Red Flag Over the Reichstag
The Battle that Finished the Nazi Regime

[The following is excerpted from Pravda (5/8/03), a Moscow daily.]

In 1998, on the eve of the 53rd anniversary of Victory Day over the Nazis, a Pravda journalist interviewed the legendary Soviet battalion commander Stepan Neustroyev who participated in raising the Red Flag over the Reichstag [Nazi Parliament in Berlin]. The veteran wrote a book, "Russian Soldier: On the Path to the Reichstag," which had added to the true story of World War II (WWII). Neustroyev looked hale and hearty at age 75, but unfortunately, this Soviet worker died soon after the interview. Although heroes die, their deeds and examples live on.

Stepan Neustroyev was a worker who dreamed of becoming a pilot, but ended up an infantryman. He entered the war in January 1942 in the bloody slaughter near Staraya Russa and made it all the way to Berlin three years later.

Q: When I read your book about our country's glorious days, I once again understood that if a soldier knows what he's fighting for, he is invincible. What do you think was your most difficult moment during WWII?

SN: The Demyanskaya operation on the Northwestern Front was the toughest. Although it seriously damaged the German army, the outcome wasn't a success. It was a terrible time; even compared to the operation in Berlin. That was the triumph of Soviet strategic skills and the military valor of the Red Army. By April 25, 1945, we had encircled the German capital. My battalion in the 3rd Shock Division rushed to the center of Berlin. On April 30, we seized Himmler's house [head of the SS, second to Hitler] and reached the square where the Reichstag stood, symbol of German Fascism. At that very moment, Soviet soldiers were told that the Army War Council had sent nine red Victory Flags….[one for each Red Army division in the operation].

Elite German SS units were massed in the center of the city. Our battalion was directly opposite to the Reichstag. The building was stormed by the battalion of Major Davydov from the right and by Senior Lieutenant Samsonov's battalion from the left. There were just 300 meters [975 feet] remaining to reach the Reichstag, an open area fired upon from every side. Together with Alexey Berest, responsible for the battalion's political training, we launched a series of attacks, but retreated each time. Two other battalions attacked unsuccessfully. Still, we carried out the order to seize the Reichstag. On the fourth attempt, at about 6:00 p.m. on April 30, our battalion rushed into the building and began hand-to-hand fighting with SS soldiers. Combat lasted for hours. By midnight, the battle was fading. Hitler's troops had retreated to some underground rooms. After we caught our breath, we organized an all-round defense. Suddenly, two comrades from regimental reconnaissance, Sergeant Yegorov and Junior Sergeant Kantaria, appeared with a Victory Flag.

Q. Did you know them?

SN: Yes, Regiment Commander Colonel Zinchenko introduced these comrades to me, saying they had the honor of raising the Soviet Flag over the Reichstag. Then the colonel gave the order and the sergeants saluted and disappeared into the darkness. It was pitch black inside the building, and they had no flashlights. Minutes later they returned. I ordered Comrade Berest to take a squad of submachine-gunners and escort the sergeants. The agonizing suspense lasted for a few minutes, but it seemed like hours. Suddenly we heard a grenade blast and a burst of machine-gun fire. The entire battalion was ready to rush upstairs, but then things calmed down. In half an hour, Yegorov and Kantaria returned smiling, together with the whole squad of submachine-gunners safe and sound. Comrade Berest said they used their belts to tie the flag to a statue of bronze horses atop the building, so the Soviet flag could wave there for a long time.

At dawn, the field kitchen delivered breakfast. However, we didn't touch it. The Soviet flag flying on top of the Reichstag infuriated the enemy. They counterattacked to drive our battalion from the building. We thought we'd all be killed, but the Samsonov and Davydov battalions came to our rescue. Fortunately, they had remained outside the Reichstag.

The Germans had hunkered down in the building which became a trap for them as we blocked all the exits. The enemy was fighting violently, but on May 2 they asked for negotiations in the semi-basement where they had been cornered. I saw SS soldiers with faces filled with both hatred and weakness. Some held their guns at the ready, but our composure prevailed. At 7:00 a.m. the Germans hoisted a white flag and, following our instructions, left the building one by one.

The battalion stayed in the Reichstag until May 10. Before the celebration we met with Soviet Marshall Georgy Zhukov and then celebrated Victory Day there. Later we participated in the Victory Parade in Moscow. I returned home to the Urals on New Year's Eve in 1946.

I was invited to work in the Department of Internal Affairs, commanding a strategic nuclear industry infrastructure. I retired in 1962 and moved with my family to Kuban in the Ukraine. My life was sometimes very hard after Perestroika [begun under Gorbachev, leading to the implosion of the Soviet Union and the return of free market capitalism]. War veterans received awful treatment. Sometimes I had no money to buy bread. Still, the great sacrifices made by the Soviet people to achieve victory were not in vain.

(CHALLENGE note: The Red Army defeated most of the Nazi war machine. Twenty-five to 30 million Soviet citizens and soldiers died during the war, compared to less than 300,000 U.S soldiers.)

Panel Debates Iraq War; Students Make It 'No Contest'

NEW YORK CITY — When hundreds of students come through, it's like a little bit of communism. Students want to learn and when motivated will work very hard at it. As part of the working class they'll do a great job building a communist society.

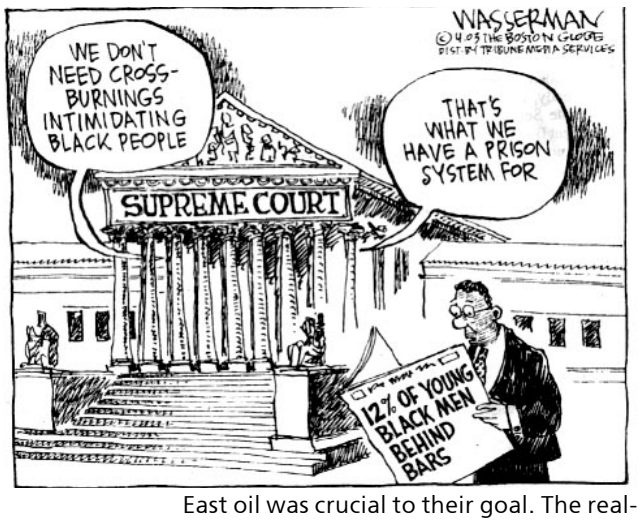
Recently 300 high school students participated in an after-school debate among three teachers on the war in Iraq. Students asked questions and made comments. One teacher was for the war, one against and one in between. The "in-between" teacher had to move toward the pro-side to even things up.

At the very beginning the students were asked to stop booing the pro-war side. Actually the pro-war teacher was only mildly so. Mainly he made the debate a success by urging lots of students to attend, and it was certainly encouraging that almost all opposed this war.

One pro-war argument advanced the necessity to eliminate Saddam Hussein, a vicious fascist. The response was that Saddam was a monster created by U. S. imperialism and that the U. S. had created many such monsters worldwide. The anti-war speaker stated that the U. S. government had never installed a democratic government anywhere. He explained how U. S. imperialism had killed 3,000,000 people in Vietnam, invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 under Lyndon Johnson to prevent the return of a popularly elected government, maintained a vicious dictatorship in Haiti for over 30 years, was responsible for 500,000 Iraqi children dying since the first Persian Gulf War and even now was denying healthcare for veterans of that war.

The students were unbelievably attentive for two hours. They wrote down incredibly thoughtful and incisive questions for the debaters. Some took the mike to ask follow-up questions. It was quite an event. Both students and staff are still congratulating the anti-war debater. He even was hugged by a staff member he didn't know (one way to get to know somebody!).

This wasn't an isolated event. All kinds of discussions and activities preceded the war. Most social studies teachers had classroom discussions, as did after-school clubs that also watched related videos. One club made buttons. There was much discussion about imperialism and police-state fascism. Both students and staff attended several rallies, both in Washington, D.C., and here.


WASSERMAN
WE DON'T NEED CROSS-BURNINGS INTIMIDATING BLACK PEOPLE
THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE A PRISON SYSTEM FOR
SUPREME COURT
12% OF YOUNG BLACK MEN BEHIND BARS

It's also interesting to note that the U. S. imperialist government is now putting many of Saddam's butchers right back in power — his police force, at Baghdad University, in the Health Ministry, etc. Angry doctors and health workers even demonstrated against this policy.

There is now a better understanding of capitalism and imperialism — that this war was part of U.S. rulers' plans for world domination and that control of Middle East oil was crucial to their goal. The realization is spreading that we have many more battles to fight and that our ultimate goal must be a communist world. Stopping a war will not do it. More are looming. Already the rulers are slashing social services. The best way to fight these wars and cuts is to join the PLP and spend a lifetime of struggle for a better world. Together let's Learn to Fight, Fight to Learn and Fight to Teach!✪